ORIGINAL EC COMICS FROM THE 1950s!

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C'EST la GUERRE!

SACRE BLEU! THESE AMERICANS! I TELL YOU, M'SIEURS, THEY ARE MAD! HOW ELSE CAN THEY BE EXPLAINED?! THAT DAY, I STOOD ON THE TARMAC OF LE SQUADRON CHIEN ROUGE, THE RED DOG SQUADRON. SUCH A TITLE!... AND I WATCHED THE AMERICAN PILOTS RETURN. I SAW THE LEAD NIEUPORT WAG ITS WINGS... SAW IT WAVER IN MID-AIR. AND WHY NOT?! IT WAS LITTLE MORE THAN A SKELETON OF AN AEROPLANE. MY HEART, SHE WAS TORN WITH PITY. AND YET, THE AMERICAN COMMANDANT... LE C.O., AS HE WAS CALLED... COULD SPEAK CALMLY...

THERE'S THE SIGNAL, COLONEL! I GUESS ADAMS DID THE JOB!

OUI! BUT HE MUST BE HURT! HIS PLANE, SHE IS DAMAGED! AND I SEE ONE... TWO GAPS IN THE FORMATION! HOW CAN YOU BE SO CALM, MAJOR?! MEN HAVE DIED...

WE MOURN OUR DEAD, COLONEL! BUT WE DON'T CRY FOR THEM. NO! I'M AFRAID THEY WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED IT LIKE THAT...

PULL UP, LIEUTENANT! PULL UP!

BA-WHAAAM!

THIS MAN ADAMS... THE PILOT WHO CRASHED... THEY TOOK HIM FROM HIS FLAMING PLANE. AND YOU WILL SEE, M'SIEURS! THE AMERICANS, THEY ARE MAD!
SO...YOUNG! SO VERY YOUNG! I DO NOT ENVY YOU, MAJOR! TO ORDER SUCH A ONE ON A SUICIDE MISSION! IT MUST HAVE BEEN A DIFFICULT THING TO DO!
FRANCE WILL NOT FORGET YOU, MON AMI! AND YOU MUST BEAR NO BITTERNESS! YOUR MAJOR HAD NO CHOICE!
BITTERNESS, SIR?! YOU'VE GOT THE SET-UP ALL COCK-EYED, SIR! I WASN'T ORDERED ON THIS FLIGHT!
NOT ORDERED? THEN... AH, MY BRAVE ONE... YOU VOLUNTEERED!
NOT EXACTLY, COLONEL! ADAMS GOT THIS CHORE BY PURE CHANCE! C'EST LA GUERRE, AS YOU SAY. IT WAS JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS!
YOU COMPREHEND, M'SIEURS? A MISSION OF DEATH! A SUICIDE FLIGHT! AND THEY HAD CHOSEN THE UNFORTUNATE ONE BY CHANCE! MERE CHANCE! I WAS, AS YOU SAY, BEWILDERED BY THIS! AND THEN, THE BRAVE ONE, THIS ADAMS, SPOKE AGAIN...
YOU DON'T GET IT, DO YOU, SIR? WELL, IT'S REALLY SIMPLE! AND I GOT THE JOB BECAUSE OF YOU... IN A WAY...
"REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME YOU VISITED US HERE. THE SQUADRON WAS AWAY AT THE TIME, OVER JERRY TERRITORY, TANGLING WITH SOME FOKKERS..."
"WE GOT BACK AFTER YOU'D LEFT, BUT MAJOR BRONSON GAVE US YOUR MESSAGE. HE MADE IT SHORT AND SWEET..."
...AND THAT'S THE STORY. THE FRENCH ARE PLANNING A MAJOR ADVANCE, AND OUR ASSIGNMENT IS TO CLEAR THE TARGETS MARKED ON THIS MAP OUT OF THEIR PATH! AND WE'VE GOT TEN DAYS TO DO IT IN! ANY QUESTIONS?
"SURE THERE WERE QUESTIONS! HOW DO YOU HIT MAYBE THIRTY TARGETS IN TEN DAYS? YOU'D GIVEN US QUITE AN ASSIGNMENT, COLONEL! BUT NOBODY ASKED ANY QUESTIONS. WE JUST WENT OUT AND DID OUR JOB..."
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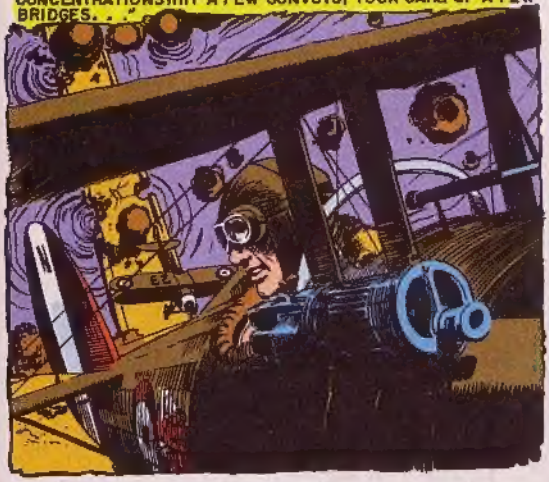
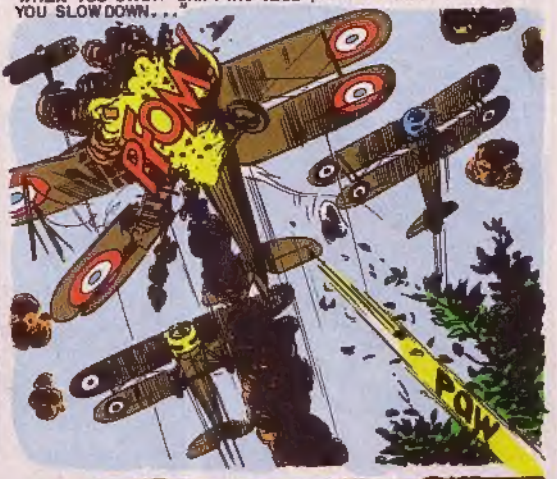
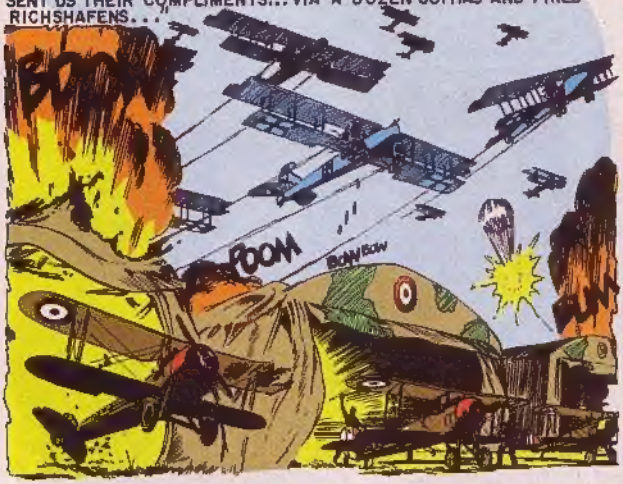
"IT WASN'T TOO BAD, AT FIRST. WE BROKE UP TROOP CONCENTRATIONS, HIT A FEW CONVOYS, TOOK CARE OF A FEW BRIDGES..."

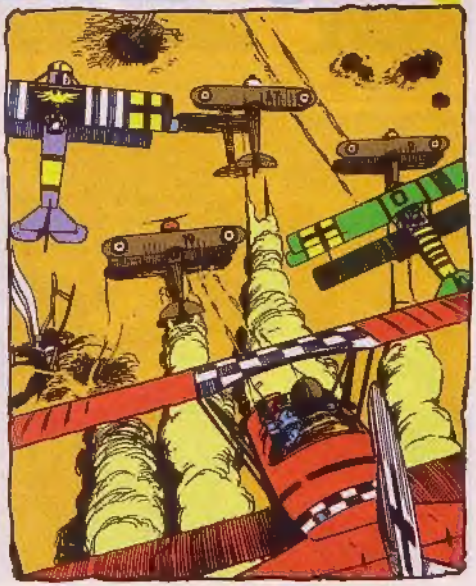


"...BUT WHEN YOU GO UP TWO, THREE TIMES A DAY... WHEN YOU START SKIPPING SLEEP, THINGS HAPPEN TO YOU! YOU SLOW DOWN..."

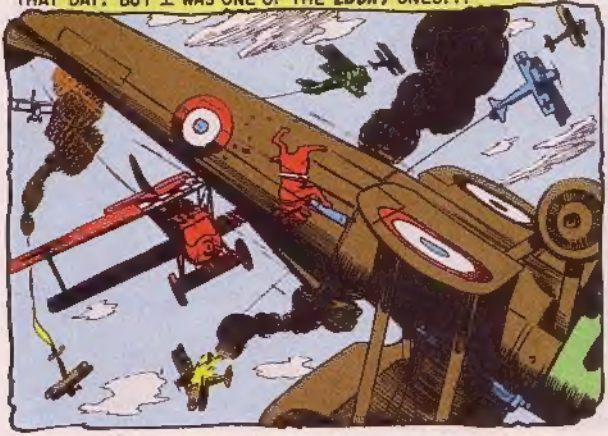


"WE LOST MEN! SO THE REST OF US HAD TO TAKE ON EVEN MORE FLIGHTS! THE BOCHE MUST HAVE FIGURED SOMETHING WAS UP, THEY SENT US THEIR COMPLIMENTS... VIA A DOZEN GOTHAS AND FRIEDRICHSHAFENS..."





"THE KAISER'S BOYS REALLY WORKED US OVER, TRYING TO CONVINCE US TO GIVE UP OUR AROUND-THE-CLOCK ASSAULTS. WHAT THE BIG BOMBERS STARTED, THE ALBATROSSES AND FOKKERS FINISHED. MY SHIP CAUGHT A DOZEN SPANDAU SLUGS THAT DAY. BUT I WAS ONE OF THE *LUCKY* ONES..."



"JERRY THREW EVERYTHING AT US. I GUESS MAJOR BRONSON TOLD YOU, WHEN YOU CAME BACK A WEEK LATER..."

MY PILOTS ARE DEAD ON THEIR FEET! THEY NEED REST! EVEN IF THEY FLEW UNDER PERFECT CONDITIONS, THE ODDS ON WHAT YOU'RE ASKING WOULD BE AGAINST THEM!
DO YOU THINK I DO NOT WEEP FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED, MAJOR? STILL... IT MUST BE DONE! C'EST LA GUERRE I HAVE MY ORDERS!
LE BOCHE IS AWARE THAT SOMETHING IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN. HE IS BRINGING IN GUNS AMMUNITION, SUPPLIES...
AND CONCENTRATING THEM IN THE YARDS AT BOIS LE DOUX! A YARD PROTECTED BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT, BALLOONS, ARTILLERY!! I TELL YOU THE SQUADRON WOULD NEVER GET THROUGH!
THE SQUADRON... NO! BUT ONE PLANE... FLYING LOW AND FAST AT NIGHT... PERHAPS! MAJOR! IT IS NOT OF MY DOING, BELIEVE ME...
THE UPPER ECHELONS HAVE IT ALL WORKED OUT, EH?! MY MEN ARE EXPENDABLE! I... SEE...
"MAJOR BRONSON GAVE IT TO US STRAIGHT, LATER..."
SOUNDS LIKE QUITE A JAUNT, SIR! JERRY WILL GIVE WHOEVER TRIES IT A WARM WELCOME! HAVE YOU... PICKED THE MAN?
I'M NOT GOING TO PICK A MAN FOR THE JOB! WAR OR NO WAR, I'M NOT GOING TO ORDER A MAN TO COMMIT SUICIDE!
I'M GOING TO ASK FOR A VOLUNTEER!
BEGGING YOUR PARDON, SIR... BUT YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU ASK FOR A VOLUNTEER FOR THIS KIND OF A MISSION! WHY NOT LEAVE IT TO LUCK?
"AND THAT'S HOW IT WAS, COLONEL. WE THREW DICE. I JUST HAPPENED TO ROLL THE LOW NUMBER..."
I GUESS THAT SETTLES THINGS, ADAMS! YOU'RE IT! YOU'LL TAKE OFF AT 19:00 HOURS, TOMORROW EVENING. THE REST OF THE SQUADRON WILL COVER YOU AS FAR AS BOIS LE DOUX! THEN, YOU'RE ON YOUR OWN...
YOU'LL CARRY A "VERY PISTOL" WITH YOU! IF, AFTER YOU HIT THE YARD, YOU'RE STILL AROUND TO TRY FOR HOME, FIRE A FLARE SO THE REST OF THE SQUADRON CAN FIND YOU AND ESCORT YOU BACK! THAT'S ABOUT ALL! GOOD LUCK!

GOOD LUCK! IS THAT NOT IRONIC, M'SIEURS? TO WISH THIS POOR, MAD AMERICAN "GOOD LUCK"... *BON CHANCE!* AH, HOW BADLY HE WAS HURT. AND YET HE TOLD ME HIS STORY. UNTIL HE COULD TALK NO MORE...

THE... THE REST... YOU KNOW, SIR!

OUI! I WAS ON THE LINE LAST NIGHT WHEN YOU TOOK OFF! I... I FRANKLY DID NOT EXPECT TO *SEE* YOU AGAIN!

BETTER *LEAVE* HIM FOR NOW, SIR! HE'S *PRETTY WEAK!*

THESE AMERICANS! BUT, AT LEAST THEY HAD HEART. I LEFT THIS ADAMS THEN... WITH HIS STORY UNFINISHED. BUT I SAW THE FLIGHT REPORT LATER. I READ THE REST OF THE STORY... FROM THE MOMENT OF TAKE-OFF...

THIS I HAD SEEN. I HAD WATCHED THEM HEAD EAST... SO SWIFT, SO BEAUTIFUL. BUT WHAT CAME AFTER WAS NOT BEAUTIFUL...

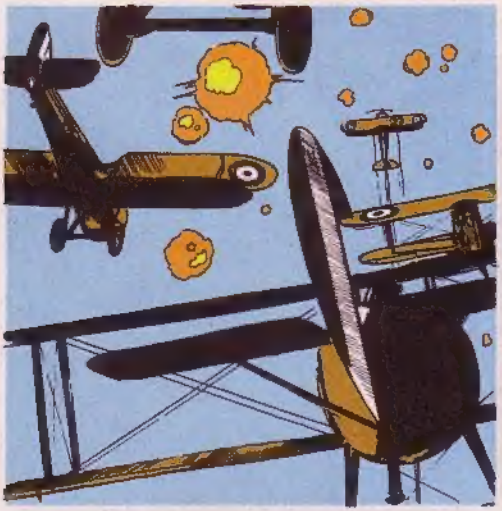
TEN MILES WEST OF *BOIS LE DOUX*, THE HUN WAITED, BARRING THE WAY. A FLIGHT OF ALBATROSSES CROSSED THE PATH OF THE NIEUPORTS. AND IT WAS THEN THAT THE FIRST GAP APPEARED IN THE AMERICAN FIGHT...

LE ADAMS... HE WENT ON... WHILE THE OTHERS FOUGHT *LE BOCHE*. AND SO, HE WAS ALONE AS HE APPROACHED THE FREIGHT YARDS AT *BOIS LE DOUX*...

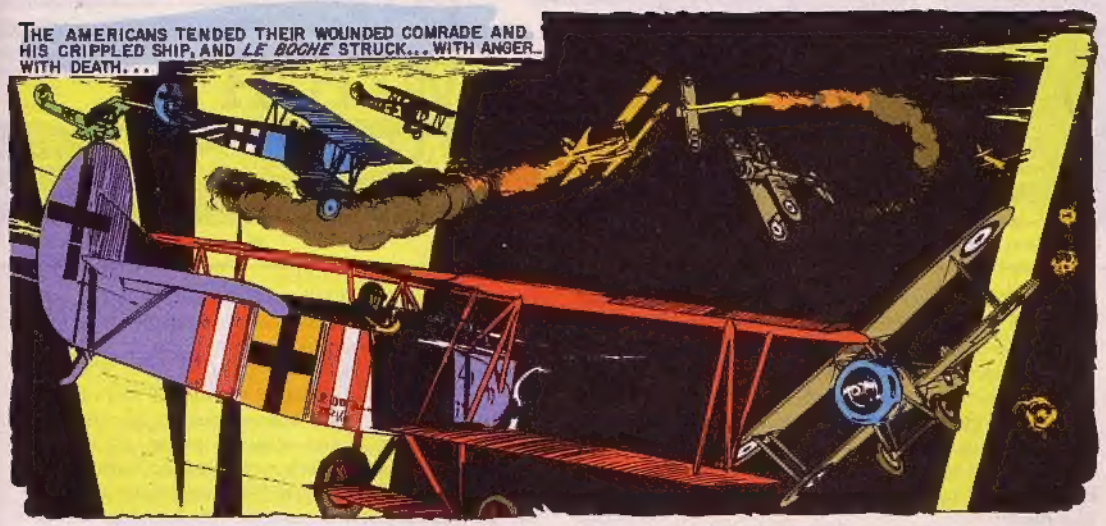
BADOOM

ONE MAN, ONE PAIR OF VICKERS GUNS, . . AGAINST ALL THAT. BECAUSE OF A LOST GAMBLE, A ROLL OF THE DICE. A LOW NUMBER. *MON DIEU!* DO YOU WONDER NOW WHY I SAY THE AMERICANS, THEY ARE MAD?!

SACRE BLEU, BUT THAT MUST HAVE BEEN A SIGHT! THE FIRST EXPLOSION SET OFF ANOTHER . . . AND ANOTHER! BUT *LE ADAMS* . . . HE WAS IN AGONY. A NEAR MISS HAD TORN HIS SHIP . . . HIS OWN BODY . . .



AH, *MES AMIS,* HOW GALLANTLY THE OTHERS WENT TO ADAMS! THEY SURROUNDED HIM . . . GUIDED HIM HOMEWARD! AND IT WAS WELL THAT THEY DID THIS! FOR *LE BOCHE* WAS ANGRY . . .



BUT, IN THE END, THE FOKKERS WERE LEFT BEHIND, AND THOSE WHO REMAINED OF *LE SQUADRON CHIEN ROUGE* RETURNED. WHEN I'D READ THE FLIGHT REPORT, I WENT TO SEE THE AMERICAN... THIS ADAMS...

IT WAS THEN, M'SIERS! IT WAS THEN THAT I LEARNED HOW TRULY MAD ARE THESE AMERICANS!

I HAD COME TO PAY MY RESPECTS, YOU COMPREHEND? TO OFFER MY SYMPATHY! BUT INSTEAD... THIS ADAMS...HE LAUGHED AT ME...

AND SO I SAY TO YOU, M'SIEURS! THESE AMERICANS... THEY *ARE* MAD!

AIRMAN UNKNOWN

At the end of the Great War, Capt. E. W. Zinn, a veteran of the French Foreign Legion and the Lafayette Escadrille, set out on a dedicated quest of his own choosing. Combing hundreds of square miles of battlegrounds, behind what once was known as the enemy's lines, he searched for the lonely graves of the lost fliers of the American Air Service.

Captain Zinn recalled the eager young American aviators, fresh from their training-camps, reporting for duty where the fighting was, and how he himself had assigned them to squadrons and each to a particular plane. Thus it was that he had come to know them all. He sent them to their stations . . . knew what ships they would pilot in aerial combat, on bombing expeditions, on reconnaissances over the lines. It was only natural that one day he would seek for those he sent out and who never returned!

His quest was to lead him over the greater part of northern France and into Belgium and Germany . . . through the torn fields and woods in the Verdun, Château-Thierry, St. Mihiel, and Meuse sectors. He tramped through the Argonne to Sedan and searched in the mountains that encircled Metz and hid the valley of the Moselle.

Many times Zinn came upon a grave with a rude cross on which was scrawled: "Unidentified American Aviator," or "Two Unidentified American Aviators." He obtained positive identification by careful examination of air-service records and by questioning peasants who saw American machines brought down.

There was the case of young Kenyon Roper . . . 91st Aero Squadron! It was fairly definitely established that Roper had come down in the night between the lines. Capt. Zinn questioned scores of peasant folk. They had heard that an American aviator had fallen, but they did not know where. Zinn found evidence of the burned plane. Then he found a small boy who had a handkerchief. Written in indelible ink on the linen was the name "Kenyon Roper." The boy led Zinn to Roper's grave.

There were Kinne and McElroy . . . 99th Aero Squadron! Only a piece of the tail of their machine was found. Their plane came down in flames between Cunel and Mantillois. Both jumped. Days were spent in hunting for them. One day, their squadron commander joined in the search. He hunted for hours in a thick wood . . . then he gave up! He was standing on the edge of a covered shell-hole, discouraged. Some impulse caused him to stir the earth in the shell-hole with his foot. And there he found young McElroy. Near by they later found Kinne.

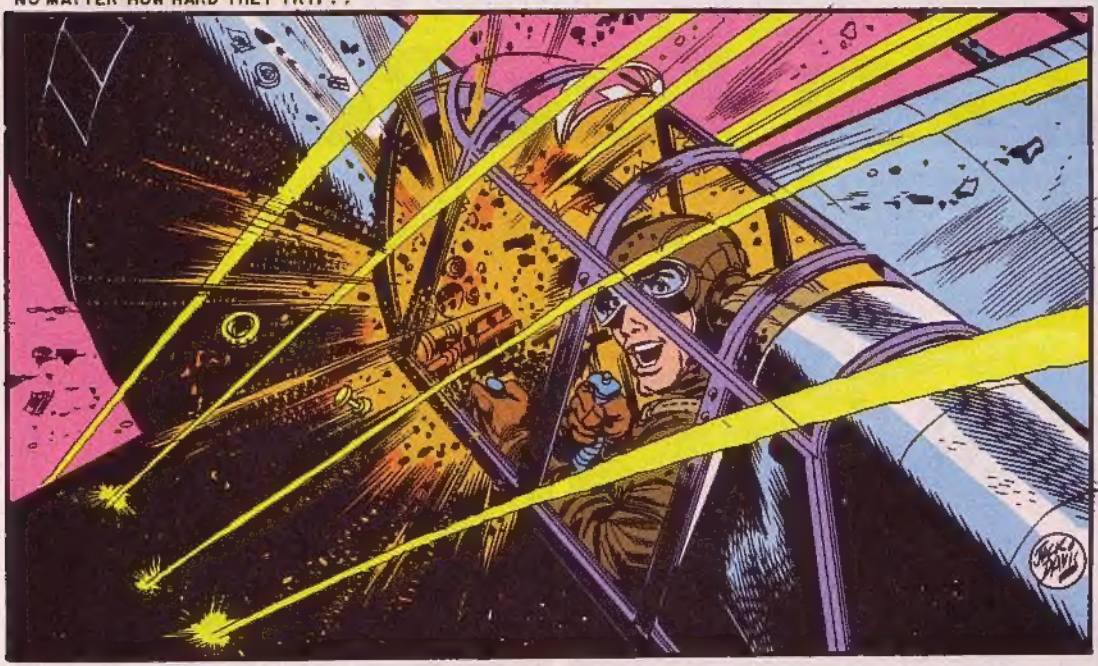
In the short time following the Armistice, Capt. Zinn manifested the same tenacious brand of patience. Out of 150 missing American aviators, he had already definitely located and identified the spots where *seventy* fell and were buried.

Then there was Lester Harter . . . 11th Squadron! He went out and his machine caught fire. Harter jumped and fell many thousand feet to his death. When awe-stricken peasants ran from the fields to his body, they found a scrap of paper in his hand. On it was written in hurried, jerky letters, "Lester Harter."

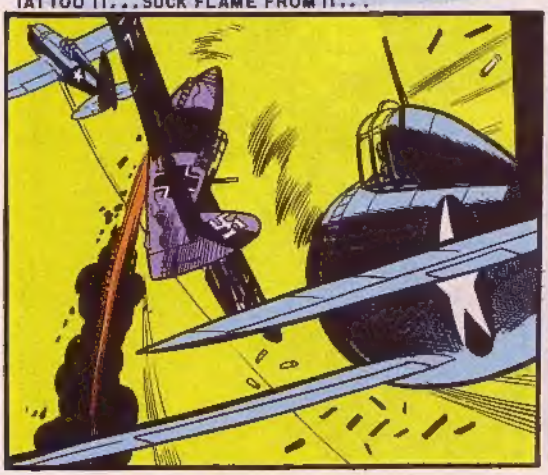
Fearing lost identity among the dead, Harter must have written his name on that piece of paper before he jumped from his plane . . . !

IRON MAN!

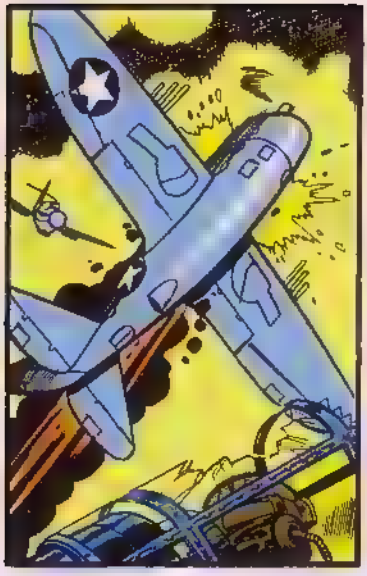
YOU'VE LED A CHARMED LIFE, FRED ALLISON. YOU'RE A CAPTAIN NOW. YOU'VE GOT NINE NAZI PURSUIT PLANES AND FOUR BOMBERS TO YOUR CREDIT. THEY LOOK REAL GOOD PAINTED ON THE SIDE OF YOUR P-47. YES, SIR, YOU FEEL PRETTY COCKY, SITTING UP THERE, HIGH OVER THE CHANNEL, FLYING FORMATION PATROL. AND THEN IT HAPPENS! MESSERSCHMITTS! THEY SCREAM DOWN AT YOU OUT OF THE SUN! YOU THUMB OFF A QUICK BURST TO CLEAR YOUR GUNS AND STICK RIGHT, PEELING OFF. THEN... THE PLASTIC CANOPY ABOVE YOU DISINTEGRATES. YOUR SHATTERED INSTRUMENTS LEAP FROM THEIR MOUNTINGS. LEADEN HORNETS BUZZ AROUND YOUR EARS. AND SUDDENLY, YOU LAUGH... BITTERLY... ALMOST CRAZILY. IF ONLY THEY KNEW. IF ONLY THOSE NAZI 109'S KNEW THAT THEY CAN'T HURT YOU... NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY TRY...



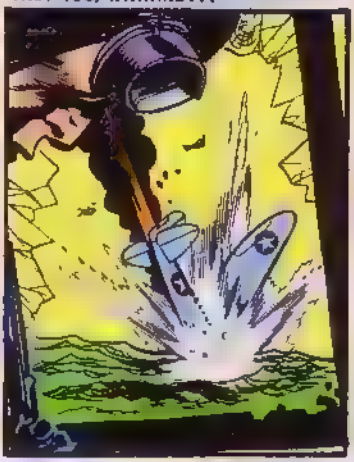
THE 109 ON YOUR TAIL HANGS ON AND THE P-47 ABOVE AND BEHIND IT WHIPS AROUND, ITS GUNS CHATTERING. PARALLEL STREAMS OF FLAME FINGER THE NAZI SHIP... TATTOO IT... SUCK FLAME FROM IT...



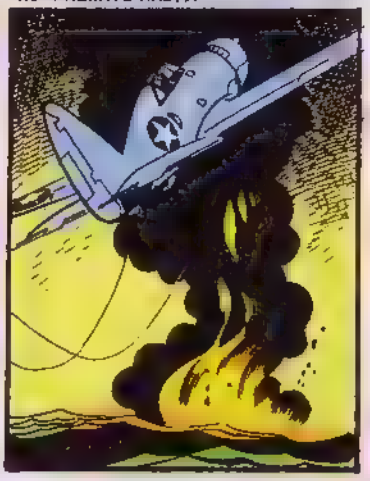
HADLY, YOUR WING MAN, BLASTS THE SHRIEKING DEATH OFF YOUR TAIL. YOU SHOUT INTO YOUR MIKE. YOU KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN, *YOU KNOW!* YOU'RE INDESTRUCTIBLE! BUT THE OTHERS... YOUR FELLOW PILOTS... THEY'RE NOT!



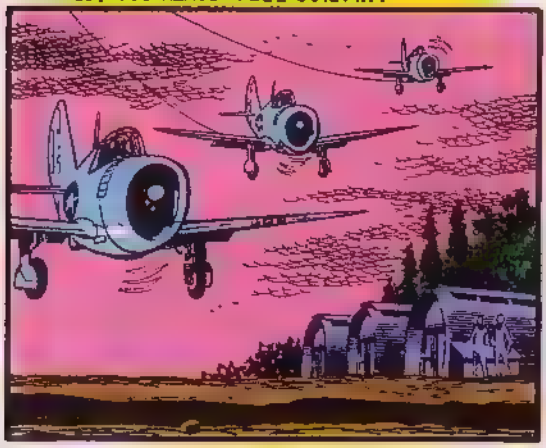
YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENS TO HADLEY. AND THEN, YOU'RE FIGHTING YOUR *THUNDERBOLT*... LOSING ALTITUDE. AS YOU NEAR THE TOSSING SURFACE OF THE CHANNEL, JOHNSON STREAKS PAST YOU, WHINING...



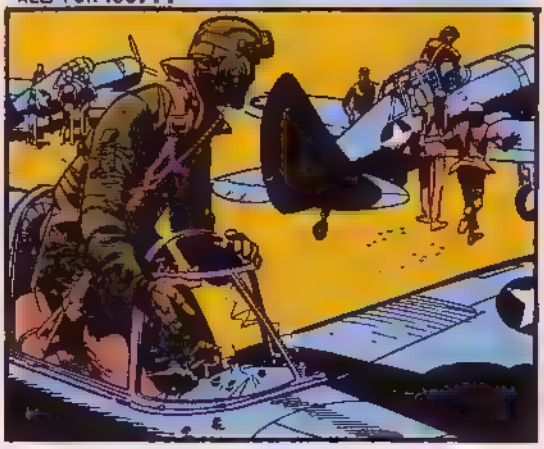
HADLY... JOHNSON... SNUFFED OUT! BUT, YOU? OH, NO! NOT YOU! YOU'RE LUCKY. IT HAPPENS JUST IN TIME... SOMEHOW... AS IT HAS BEFORE... AS IT ALWAYS HAS...



YOU CLIMB.. AND THE 109'S ARE GONE. YOU SHAKE YOUR HEAD. OTHER MEN GET SHOT UP! OTHER MEN DIE! BUT YOU LIVE! YOU ALWAYS LIVE! AND YOU'RE ALMOST ASHAMED. YOU ALMOST FEEL GUILTY...

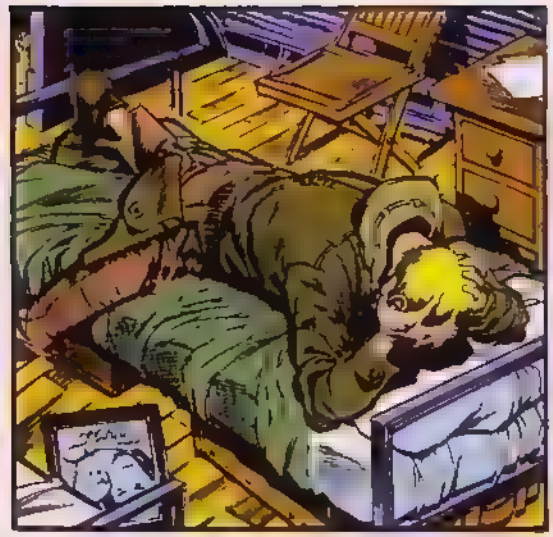


YOU AND TWO OTHERS... THREE OUT OF FIVE... RETURN TO YOUR AIR BASE DEEP IN ENGLAND. AND THE SILENCE THAT DESCENDS OVER THE STRIP SEEMS TO BE ESPECIALLY FOR YOU...

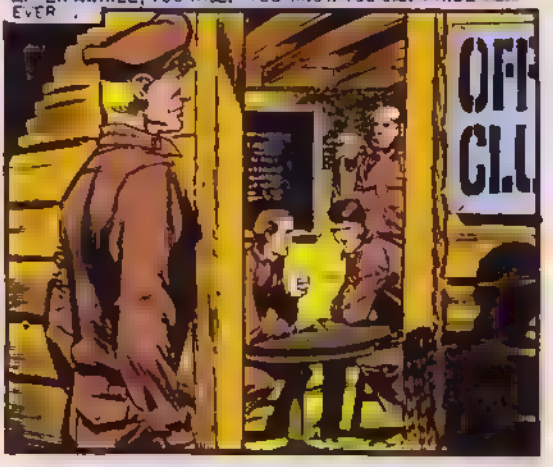


YOU WALK TOWARD YOUR QUARTERS, AND THE E.M. ...THE GROUND CREWS.. SEEM TO LOOK RIGHT THROUGH YOU... AS IF ACCUSING YOU... AS IF YOU HAD NO RIGHT TO BE SO LUCKY. THEY'RE NOT... REALLY. YOU KNOW THAT BUT YOU'RE TIGHT INSIDE. ALL WOUND UP...

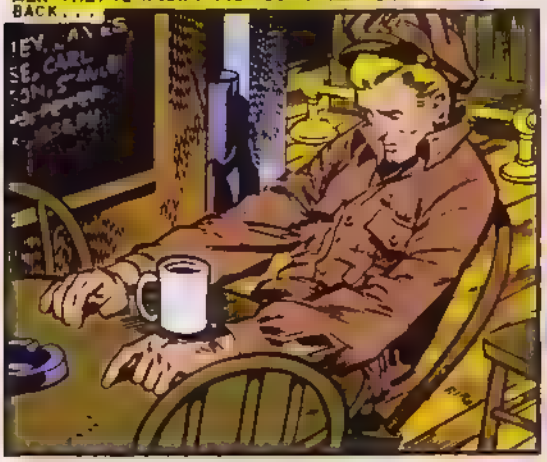
NOBODY ANSWERS. THERE'S JUST THE SILENCE. YOU GO INSIDE... INTO THE QUARTERS YOU SHARED WITH JIM HADLY...



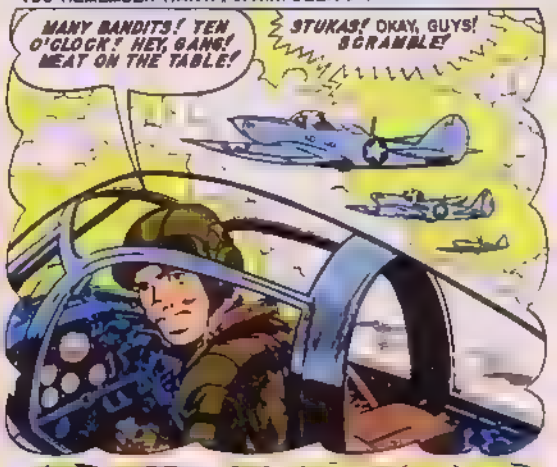
FOR AN HOUR, YOU JUST LIE THERE, FIGHTING BACK THE SOBS. IT'S AS IF... AS IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE ALIVE. YOU CAN'T FACE THE OTHERS. NOT THEM. BUT AFTER AWHILE, YOU RISE. YOU KNOW YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM EVER.



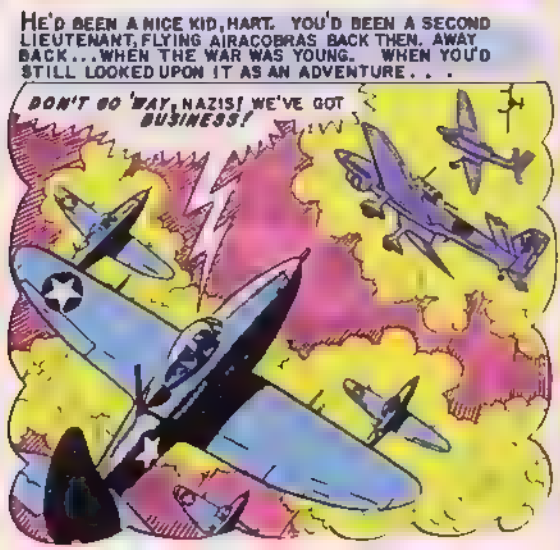
IN THE OFFICERS' CLUB, YOU SIT ALONE, AFTERWARD, AND YOU'RE GLAD THAT NO ONE SPEAKS TO YOU. YOU'RE GLAD THAT THE OTHERS ARE SILENT, AS THEY ALWAYS ARE WHEN MEN THEY'VE KNOWN AND FLOWN WITH DON'T COME BACK...

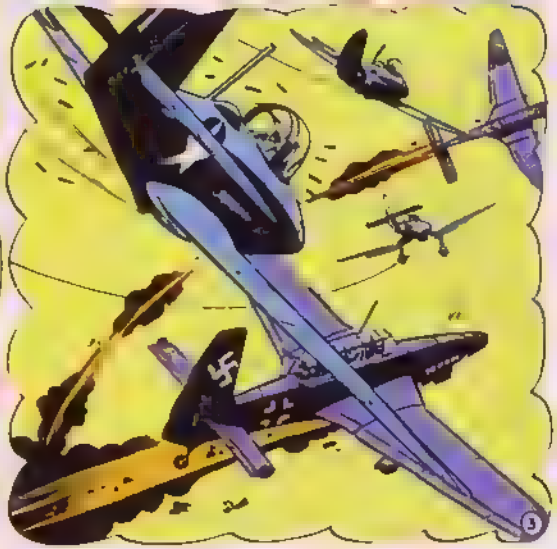


AND THERE ARE SO MANY WHO WON'T COME BACK! THEIR NAMES ARE UP THERE ON THE BOARD... WITH A LINE THROUGH THEM. CHALKED OFF! MORGAN... HART... YOU REMEMBER HART... PAINFULLY...



HE'D BEEN A NICE KID, HART. YOU'D BEEN A SECOND LIEUTENANT, FLYING AIRACOBRAS BACK THEN. AWAY BACK... WHEN THE WAR WAS YOUNG. WHEN YOU'D STILL LOOKED UPON IT AS AN ADVENTURE...





YEAH, HART HAD BEEN A NICE KID. THEY'D ALL BEEN NICE KIDS. BUT, IN A WAR, DEATH MAKES NO SPECIAL CHOICES... NO EXCEPTIONS...
HART!
THE REAR GUNNER OF THE STUKA HAD PLANTED A DIRECT HIT ON HART'S BELL P-39. HE'D PLUMMETED EARTHWARD, AND YOU'D FOLLOWED HIM DOWN...
I'M OKAY, ALLISON! NOT HIT! THAT SO-AND-SO JUST CONKED OUT MY ENGINE!
OKAY, BOY! SEE IF YOU CAN SET HER DOWN. I'LL COVER YOU!
SURE, YOU'D COVERED HART. AND THE STUKA ON YOUR TAIL HAD FORGOTTEN ALL ABOUT YOU. WHY BOTHER, WHEN HE HAD A SITTING DUCK!?
THUMP!
YOU'D COVERED HART. BUT IF YOU HADN'T...IF YOU HADN'T LED THAT STUKA DOWN AFTER HIM, HE MIGHT BE ALIVE TODAY. AND IT HADN'T HELPED WHEN YOU'D EVENED THE SCORE...
SO MANY HAD DIED. BUT NOT YOU. AFTER A WHILE, YOU'D EVEN BECOME SORT OF A HERO TO THOSE NEW REPLACEMENTS COMING UP...
SO THAT'S ALLISON! THE "IRON MAN" HIMSELF, EH, SIR?
THAT'S HIM! SIXTY-ONE MISSIONS AND NOT A SCRATCH! HE'S QUITE A PILOT!
4

HIS NAME WAS SAXON. HE'D LOOKED AT YOU WITH ADMIRATION AND YOU'D WISE-CRACKED IT OFF...

DON'T LET THE COLONEL *KID* YOU, FELLER! IT'S ALL DONE WITH *MIRRORS!*

AT FIRST YOU'D EVEN ENJOYED THE WHISPERED ADMIRATION OF THE REPLACEMENTS AS THEY'D COME IN. BUT ONLY FOR A LITTLE WHILE...

SAXON!

YEAH, SAXON HAD BEEN A NICE KID, TOO. AND A DORNIER 217 HAD BLASTED HIM OUT OF THE SKY...

YOU'D PAID OFF FOR THAT ONE TOO, IN ANGRY INCENDIARY STEEL...

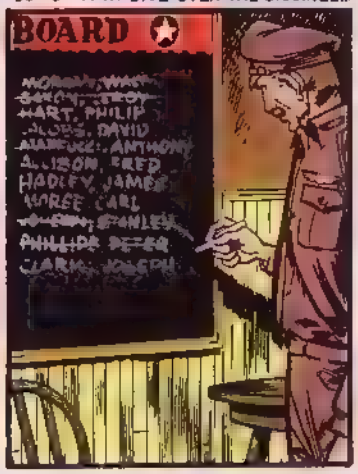
BUT IT HADN'T BROUGHT SAXON BACK...NOR ANY OF THEM. HOW MANY HAD YOU SEEN GO? YOU'D LOST COUNT. YOU'D EVENTUALLY LOST ALL EMOTION, TOO. AFTER THE OTHERS BEGAN TO LOOK AT YOU QUEERLY. AFTER THEY'D BEGUN TO EDGE AWAY. LIKE NOW...

CIGARETTE, MORSE?

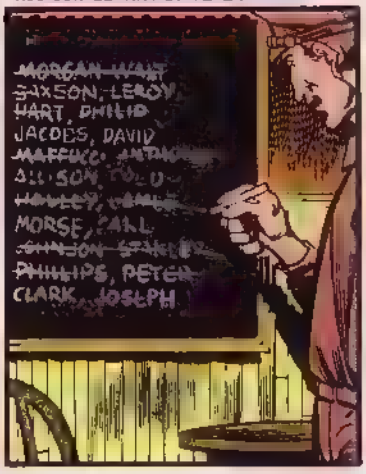
MORSE, CARL
JOHNSON, STANLEY
PHILLIPS, PETE
CLARK, JOSEPH

MAYBE MORSE HEARS YOU...BUT HE PRETENDS NOT TO. WELL...YOU CAN'T BLAME HIM, IN A WAY, . .

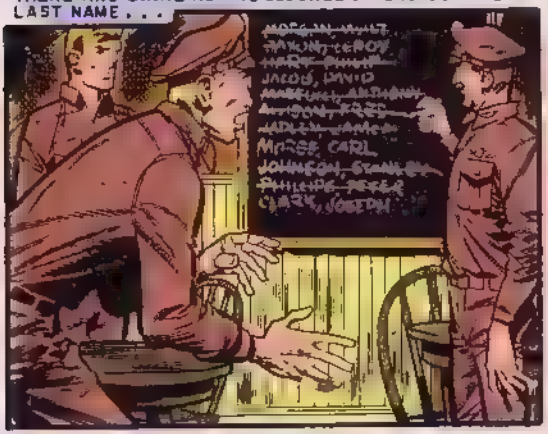
WHEN THE COLONEL COMES IN, YOU RISE WITH THE OTHERS, BUT YOU DON'T BELONG. YOU WISH, FOR A MOMENT, THAT YOU'D NEVER PULLED OUT OF THAT DIVE OVER THE CHANNEL..



JOHNSON...GONE! HADLY...GONE! YOU'VE SEEN THIS RITUAL SO MANY TIMES. AND ALWAYS, YOUR NAME REMAINED. WHY? WHY SHOULD FRED ALLISON BE ANY DIFFERENT?



WHY SHOULD YOU BE IGNORED? CAST OUT? YOUR ONLY CRIME IS THAT YOU'VE MANAGED TO SURVIVE...TO STAY ALIVE. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? YOU WANT TO SHOUT IT OUT! BUT YOU DON'T! YOU JUST STAND THERE AND STARE AS THE COLONEL CHALKS OUT THE LAST NAME . . .



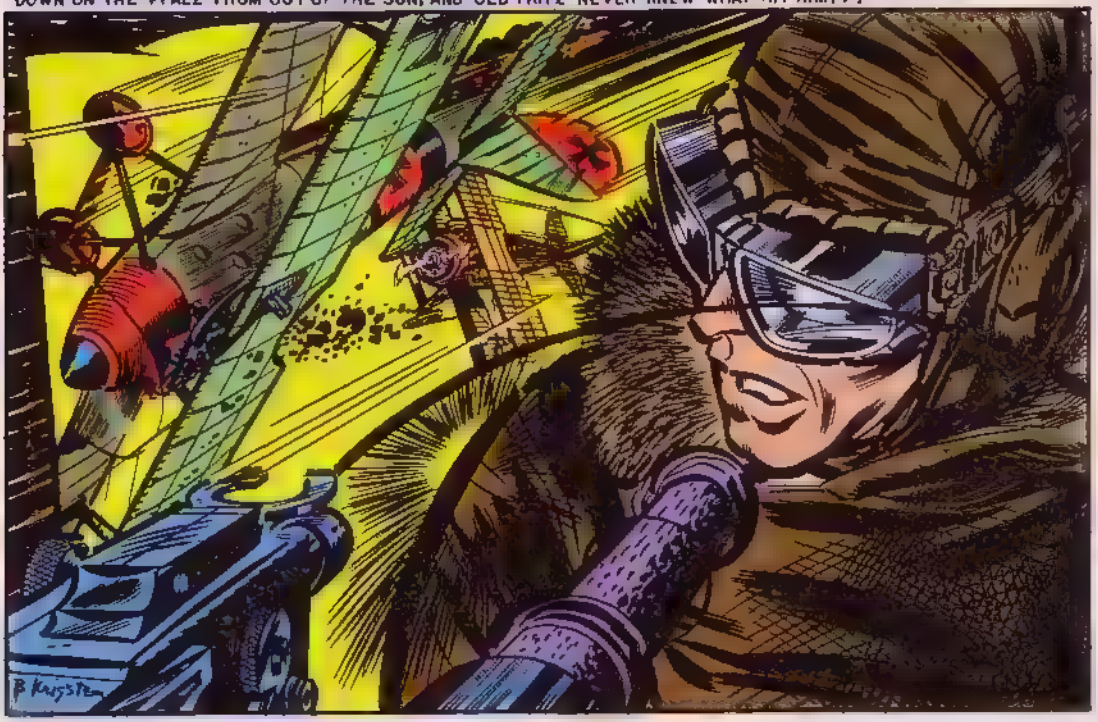
. . .AND TURNS TO LEAVE. SUDDENLY, SOMETHING VERY MUCH LIKE FEAR CLAMPS AROUND YOUR HEART. YOU RUSH TO THE DOOR. . .TO INTERCEPT HIM...CUT HIM OFF..TELL HIM HOW WRONG HE IS. . .

AND SUDDENLY, YOU UNDERSTAND WHY NO ONE HAS SPOKEN TO YOU. WHY NO ONE HAS COME NEAR YOU. WHEN THE C.O. WALKS RIGHT THROUGH YOU. . . YOU UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY. . .

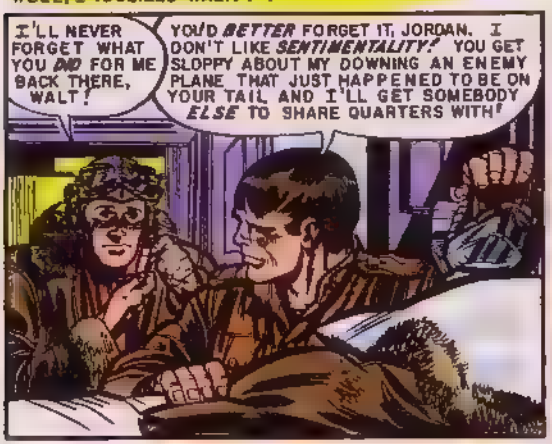
THE JERRIES PULLED AN ACE AND WENT FOR THE TRICK, BUT WE OF THE 8TH SQUADRON FIGURED WE HELD THE TOP HAND. WE PLANNED ON BEATING THAT ACE IN A GAME IN WHICH...

SPADS WERE TRUMP

I WAS A GREEN KID THAT DAY IN APRIL, '18... GREEN IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE. IT WAS MY FIRST COMBAT DOGFIGHT... AND BEFORE I KNEW IT, THERE WAS THIS PFALZ D-3 ON MY BACK. I COULDN'T SHAKE HIM. I TRIED EVERY STUNT IN THE BOOK... AND A FEW MORE I MADE UP IN THE PANIC OF THE MOMENT. BUT THAT HEINIE HUNG ON AND KEPT PUMPING SPANDAU STEEL AT ME. SO I TRIED PRAYERS... AND LT. WALT MULLER ANSWERED THEM. HE CAME DOWN ON THE PFALZ FROM OUT OF THE SUN, AND OLD FRITZ NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM...



I FOUND OUT LATER I WASN'T THE FIRST GUY WALT HAD GOTTEN OUT OF HOT WATER. HE WAS COLD AND EFFICIENT AT THIS FIGHTING BUSINESS... A FLYING ICEBERG. YEP, THAT SPAD OUTFIT OF OURS ADMIRED HIM. AND ME... WELL, I IDOLIZED WALT...



IF WALT MULLER HAD ONE FAULT, IT WAS OVER-MODESTY. *JAGSTAFFEL II'S* COMMANDANT, COLONEL ERNST ROEGEN, LOST A LOT OF HIS TOP ACES TO WALT'S VICKERS GUNS. BUT MENTION THAT AROUND WALT AND HE'D WALK AWAY...

NOT THAT WALT WASN'T SOCIABLE! AFTER A SCRAP, HE'D HEAD FOR THE CANTEEN AND BEER IT UP WITH THE REST OF US. HE'D EVEN TALK SHOP, PROVIDING NOBODY TRIED TO MAKE A HERO OUT OF HIM. . .

GIVE US CRATES AS GOOD AS *JERRY'S* GOT AND WE'LL DRIVE HIM OUT OF THE *SKY!* EH, WALT..?

I DON'T KNOW, LANK! I'VE GOT A *HEALTHY RESPECT* FOR THE KAISER'S FLY-BOYS! YOU'VE GOT TO STAY *WIDE AWAKE* WHEN YOU MIX IT UP WITH THEM, OR YOU *DON'T COME HOME!*

WALT WOULDN'T EVEN MARK HIS "KILLS" ON THE SIDE OF HIS SHIP LIKE THE OTHER GUYS DID. BUT THE BOCHE KNEW WALT'S SPAD, AND OL' COLONEL ROEGEN KEPT SENDING UP HIS BEST BOYS TO BRING WALT DOWN. ONCE, WHEN WALT WAS ON PATROL, TWO FOKKERS ANGLED DOWN ON HIM. . .

HE NEVER SAW THE TWO BOCHE PLANES. . . NEVER SAW THEM DROP OUT OF THE CLOUDS. . . DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THEY WERE THERE, TILL SPANDAU SLUGS STARTED HAILING DOWN AROUND HIM. . .

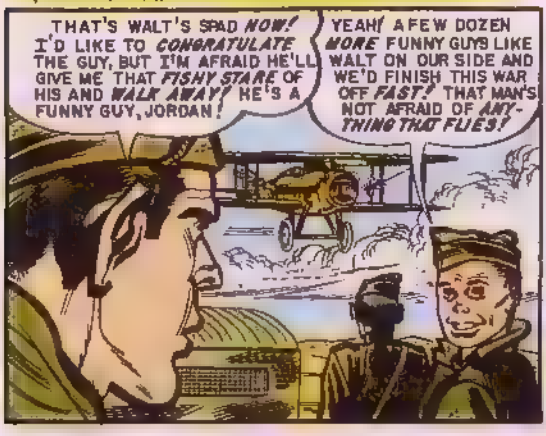
THEN HE WENT INTO ACTION. HE LEANED ON HIS JOYSTICK... POURED ON SAUCE... AND PUT HIS SPAD INTO A VRILLE. THE FOKKER BOYS TORE DOWN PAST HIM TO MAKE SURE HE WAS OUT OF CONTROL...

THAT WAS WHEN WALT YANKED BACK ON THE STICK. THE SPAD SHUDDERED, THEN CLIMBED AT A STEEP ANGLE...

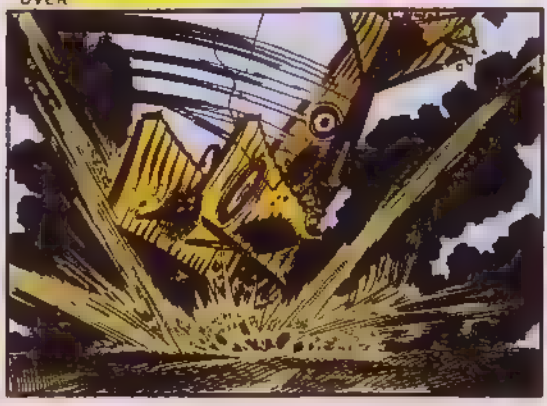
WHEN THE JERRIES PULLED OUT AND STARTED BACK UP, WING TO WING, WALT WAS NOSING DOWN AGAIN, HIS VICKERS CHATTERING. . .

THE FOKKER ON THE LEFT BLEW UP LIKE A FIRE CRACKER ON THE FOURTH OF JULY. THE ONE ON THE RIGHT PEELED OFF. WALT KICKED RUDDER AND LET HIM HAVE IT WHILE HE WAS STILL IN A BANK. . .

MAYBE WALT WOULD'VE TOLD US ABOUT THAT ACTION... AND MAYBE NOT. WE GOT CONFIRMATION ON THE VICTORIES FROM A FRENCH MAJOR ON THE GROUND WHO'D WITNESSED IT, EVEN BEFORE WALT REACHED THE 'DRONE...

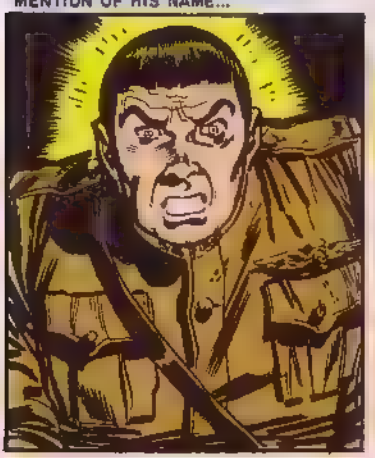


BUT THAT ISN'T THE WHOLE STORY ABOUT WALT MULLER .ONLY THE BACKGROUND. THE REAL STORY BEGAN THE NEXT MORNING. AN EIGHT-MAN PATROL, INCLUDING WALT, TOOK OFF AT DAWN BUT WALT'S SPAD HIT A ROCK, WRECKED THE UNDERCARRIAGE, AND FLIPPED OVER



THE REST OF THE MORNING, WALT AND I SAT AROUND THE REC HALL, TALKING. HE WAS IN A GOOD MOOD...THAT IS, UNTIL THE PATROL CAME BACK... OR RATHER WHAT WAS LEFT OF IT...

SOMEBODY GASPED IT OUT LIKE THE WORDS WERE POISON. "THE RED EAGLE" MEANT NOTHING TO ME AT THE TIME... BUT WALT WENT CHALK WHITE AT THE MENTION OF HIS NAME...



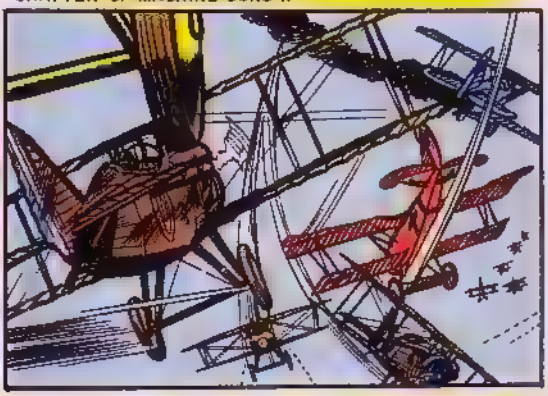
THEN HE TURNED ON HIS HEELS AND WENT OUT. . .

WELL, WE DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT LONG FOR THE CHANCE. THE NEXT MORNING, THE 8TH'S C.O. SENT UP A DOZEN OF US TO SHOOT UP *JAGSTAFFEL II'S 'DROME*...

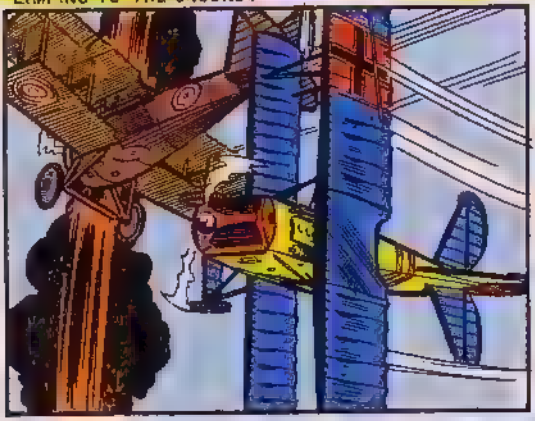
ADAMS! I GOT TEN BUCKS SAYS LT. MULLER KNOCKS THE *FEATHERS* OFF THIS "RED EAGLE" FIRST TIME HE SEES HIM!

YOU GOT YOURSELF A *BET*, GREASEMONKEY! I WAS WITH AN ESCADRILLE BEFORE I CAME HERE, AND I KNOW MAYBE *TEN PILOTS* THAT TRANSFERRED TO THE *INFANTRY* RATHER THAN FLY AGAINST THE "RED EAGLE"

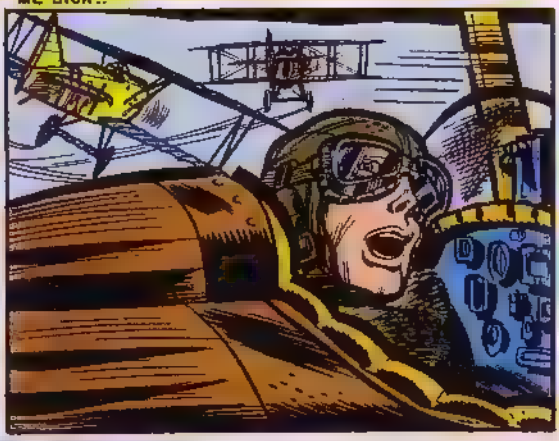
A HEINIE BALLOON OBSERVER MUST HAVE SEEN OUR SQUADRON AND REPORTED AHEAD, BECAUSE BEFORE WE REACHED JAGSTAFFEL II, A SWARM OF PFALZES AND FOKKERS INTERCEPTED US...AND THE AIR WAS SUDDENLY ECHOING WITH THE SCREAM OF STRUT WIRES AND THE CHATTER OF MACHINE GUNS ..



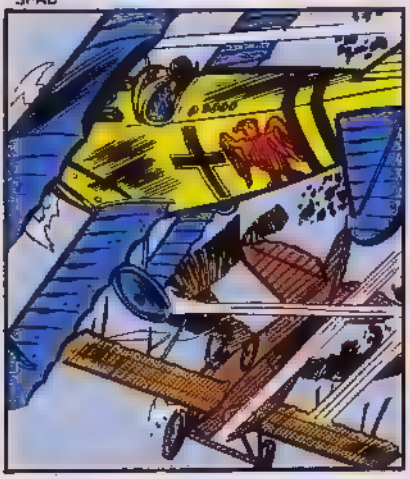
THEN I SPOTTED THAT SHIP... THE FOKKER WITH THE RED EAGLE EMBLEM ON ITS SIDE! I NEVER SAW SUCH FLYING! RIGHT OFF, HE SENT PETE PETERSON'S SPAD LIMPING TO THE GROUND.



NEXT, THE RED EAGLE GOT PAUL WIGGINS IN HIS SIGHTS. I LOOKED AROUND FOR WALT. AND WHAT I SAW MADE ME SICK..



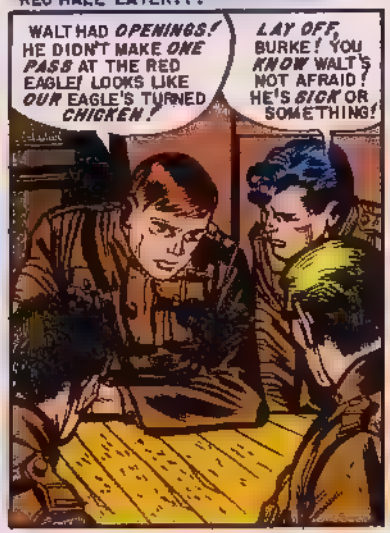
WHILE THE REST OF US HAD OUR HANDS FULL, WALT JUST MADE A FEW FEEBLE PASSES AT THE ENEMY. MOSTLY, HE FLEW AROUND THE FRINGE OF THE FRACAS. SO, THIRTY SECONDS LATER, THE RED EAGLE KNOCKED A WING OFF PAUL WIGGINS' SPAD



ALL IN ALL, ONLY SEVEN OF OUR PATROL LIMPED BACK TO AERO 8. IT WAS A DEMORALIZED BUNCH THAT SAT IN THE REC HALL LATER...

WALT HAD *OPENINGS!* HE DIDN'T MAKE *ONE PASS* AT THE RED EAGLE! LOOKS LIKE *OUR* EAGLE'S TURNED *CHICKEN!*

LAY OFF, BURKE! YOU *KNOW* WALT'S NOT AFRAID! HE'S *SICK* OR SOMETHING!

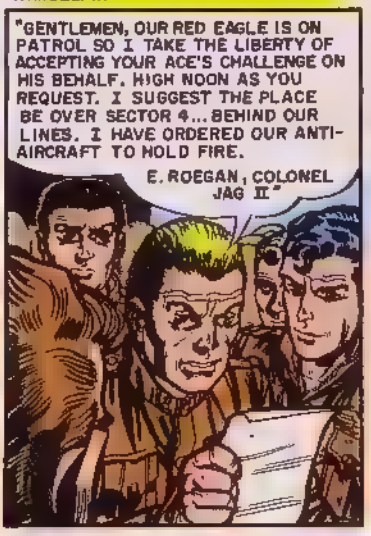


HE'S GOT HIS *WIND UP*, JORDAN, AND *YOU KNOW IT!* HE'S *SCARED* OF THE RED EAGLE, JUST LIKE THE *REST* OF US!

YOU'LL NEVER MAKE ME *BELIEVE* THAT, SMITTY! GIVE WALT A CHANCE AND HE'LL *CLIP THAT EAGLE'S WINGS!*

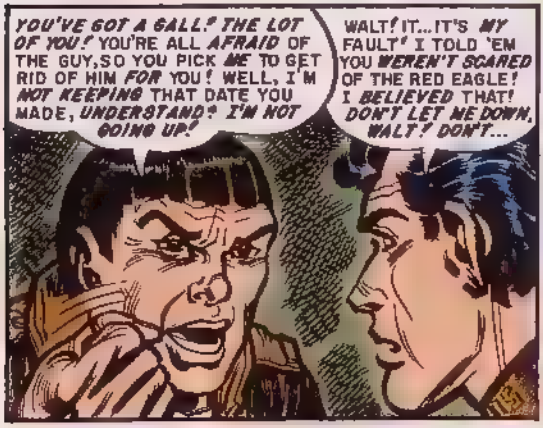
MAYBE YOU'VE *GOT* SOMETHING THERE, JORDAN!

So, the challenge was dropped... and an hour later, the answer came ..from colonel ernst roegan himself...

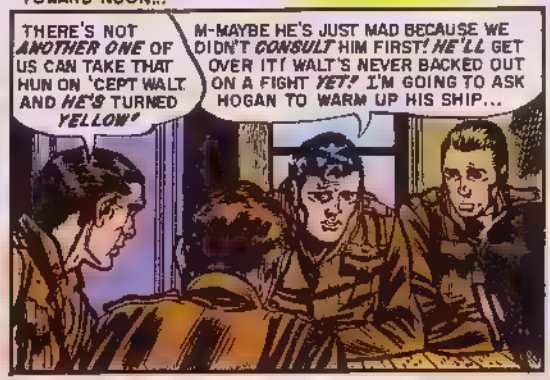


As smitty finished reading the letter, walt came puffing up..

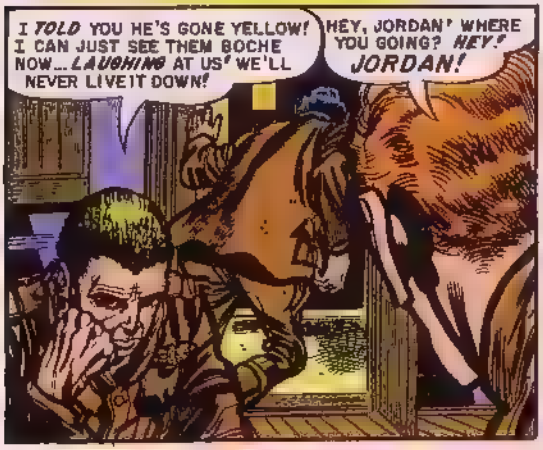
Walt sucked in his breath as if he'd been slapped. His face flushed with anger and his eyes flashed...



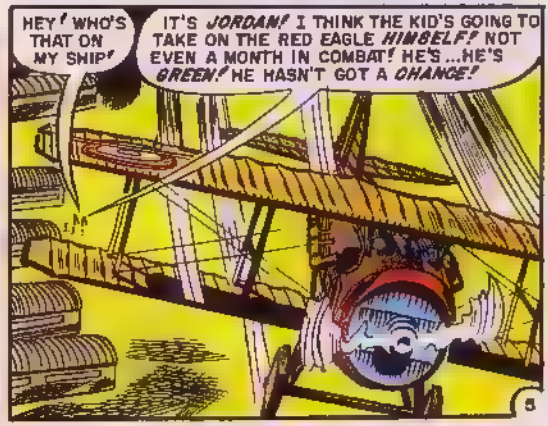
Walt gave me a cold look and stalked out of the rec hall We all sat around glumly, and I felt sick inside listening to them talk about walt being scared. And the clock hands kept creeping around toward noon...



At eleven thirty-six, walt's spad was on the runway, its hispano-suiza humming smoothly but walt didnt show. We waited. Suddenly, I knew he wasn't coming. And suddenly, I got a crazy urge...

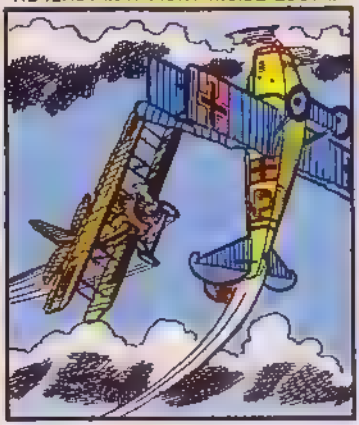


I ran to walt's ship, kicked out the chocks, and pulled myself into the cockpit as she started to roll. By the time the rest of the gang realized what was happening, I was in the air. I looked down and saw walt rushing up to them...



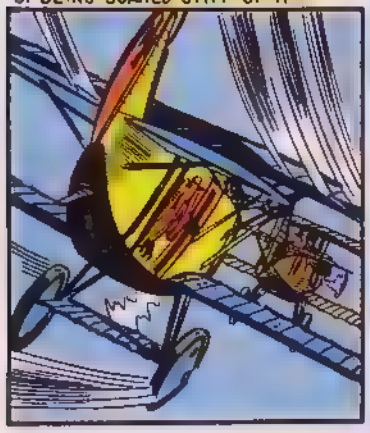
THE RED EAGLE WAS CIRCLING SLOWLY AT EIGHT THOUSAND FEET OVER THE APPOINTED SPOT, LIKE A BIRD OF PREY. HE BANKED WIDE... PULLED ALONGSIDE ..AND TOOK A GOOD LOOK AT ME

JERRY MUST HAVE KNOWN I WASN'T WALT BY MY ASH-WHITE FACE. HE KINDA GRINNED AND ROLLED HIS FOKKER AWAY. I KICKED RUDDER TO SWING AFTER HIM, BUT HE WAS ALREADY IN A TIGHT INSIDE LOOP...



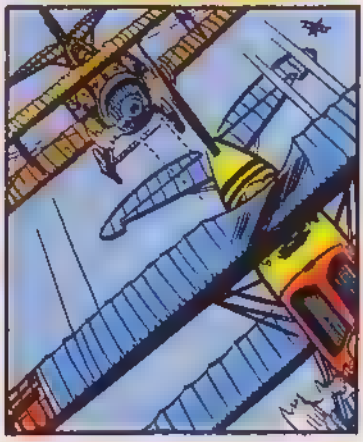
NEXT THING I KNEW, HE WAS ON MY TAIL AND INCENDIARY SLUGS WERE FANNING HOT PAST MY CHEEKS...

HE STARTED PLAYING CAT AND MOUSE WITH ME. THE WAY HE HUNG BEHIND ME, YOU'D THINK I WAS TOWING HIM. OH, HOW I WISHED I WAS ON THE GROUND, THEN, WHERE I COULD BE ADMIRING THE MAN'S FLYING INSTEAD OF BEING SCARED STIFF OF IT



SOME SLUGS RIPPED INTO MY INSTRUMENT PANEL, AND I THOUGHT IT WAS CURTAINS FOR ME. BUT THEN, SUDDENLY.. ANOTHER SPAD STREAKED IN FROM OUT OF NOWHERE. I KNEW THAT FLYING! IT WAS *WALT!*

HE CUT BETWEEN US AND TOOK ON THE RED EAGLE FOR HIMSELF. I JUST CIRCLED AROUND, WATCHING. OH, WHAT A DOG FIGHT THAT WAS! WALT FINALLY GOT ON HIS TAIL AND POURED ON THE STEEL...



...AND THE RED EAGLE WAS NO MORE! HIS SHIP STREAKED EARTHWARD... ITS ENGINE GONE .. ITS FUEL TANK AFLAME

I FOLLOWED WALT BACK TO THE DROME MEEKLY. HE WAS LIKE ICE. BUT LATER, WHEN I WENT INTO THE QUARTERS WE SHARED, I FOUND HIM CRYING.

WALT'S BRIEF ANSWER TOLD THE WHOLE STORY OF WHY HE HADN'T WANTED TO TANGLE WITH THE RED EAGLE.

THE ENTERTAINMENT BOX

FILM GUIDE

Alfred Hitchcock is considered filmland's M.S. (Master of Suspense), a degree he earned during the past twenty years with such film masterpieces as "The Lady Vanishes."

In his latest offering, TO CATCH A THIEF, he mixes many palatable ingredients. Somehow suspense is outspiced by the photography and the dialogue.

TO CATCH A THIEF stars Cary Grant and Grace Kelly. It was filmed on the Riviera . . . and the scenery is the kind that will make you want to save your pennies to get there someday.

The story, which has to do with the return of a notorious thief, "The Cat," is very involved and sometimes very puzzling. However it serves as a good showcase for the lovely scenes of the South of France, the lovely views of Grace Kelly, and the amusing chase and love scenes with Grant and Kelly.

There are many good laughs in the role played by Jessie Royce Landis and the multi-millionaire aunt, who got that wealthy when oil was discovered in her back yard, and who scorns the pretense and hypocrisy of so-called high society.

ACES HIGH readers will note that there is a plane in this picture. You see it for eleven seconds . . . but you know it is there for Brigette Auber displays her legs for the pilot to distract his attention from a search he is making. Oh, well . . .

RECORD GUIDE

One trouble with original cast albums is that the musical shows sometimes close before the album is released.

Such was the case with "Seventh Heaven." It was a very expensive, very attractive show. But somehow, it lulled its audience to sleep.

Now Decca has released its album. The album, like the show, stars Gloria De Haven and Ricardo Montalban. It features Robert Clary. When you listen to the record, it seems somehow that it lulls you to sleep. So, you know this is the authentic original cast and musical score!

Another show which will probably have closed when you read this is "Ankles Away." Some people think the trouble with this show is that it opened before it closed.

Decca has this original cast album too.

Now, oddly, this album features people who don't do as good a job as people who replaced them when they left the show.

For instance, Jane Kean sings many of the songs on the album. But Georgia Reed who replaced her (and who is not on the album) did a much better job.

That's show business for you: that's the way it is.

ORDEAL

STONER STOOD, ALONE, IN THE READY ROOM. OUTSIDE, ON THE FIELD, HE COULD HEAR THE MURMUR OF ANXIOUS VOICES ENGLISH MINGLING WITH SING-SONG CHINESE. OUTSIDE, HE COULD HEAR THE ENGINES ROARING. AND WHEN HE STEPPED TO THE DOORWAY, HE COULD EVEN SEE HIS OWN SHIP ON THE LINE, WITH THE GROUND CREW BOYS FEEDING LONG RIBBONS OF .50'S INTO ITS THOMPSONS, GETTING IT READY. AND STONER SHIVERED. HE WAS ALONE. ALONE.. AND AFRAID. THE IRONY OF IT. A MAN TRAVELS HALFWAY 'ROUND THE WORLD TO FIGHT FOR SOMETHING HE BELIEVES IN, AND SUDDENLY HIS HANDS ARE ICE.. HIS INSIDES KNOTTED. BECAUSE THE NEXT FEW HOURS ARE SOMETHING HE JUST CAN'T FACE... ALONE...

HE STOOD IN THE DOORWAY, WATCHING THE MORNING FLIGHT COME IN... TAXI BY. HE SAW THE FLAK TORN WINGS... THE BULLET-PUNCTURED TAILS... THE WHISP OF SMOKE TRAILING FROM ONE P-40'S ENGINE. AND HE TURNED AWAY...

LOOKS LIKE THE PATROL RAN INTO A *TOUGH TIME*, EH, LIEUTENANT?

YES... IT... IT LOOKS THAT WAY!

STONER SHUDDERED. BUT IT WASN'T THE RIDDLED PATROL HE WAS THINKING ABOUT. STONER WAS THINKING ABOUT HIMSELF. ABOUT THE ORDEAL THAT LAY AHEAD OF HIM...

THIRTY-TWO MISSIONS! THIRTY-TWO MISSIONS I'VE FLOWN AGAINST THE JAPS ... AND IT *NEVER FAZED ME!* WHY AM I SO AFRAID OF *THIS*? *WHY!?*

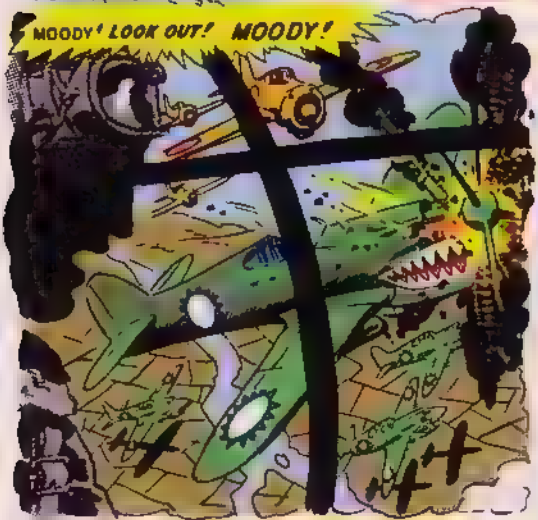
THE STORK CLUB

BUT, DEEP DOWN, STONER KNEW WHY. HE EVEN KNEW WHEN. IN A WAY, THE ORDEAL HE NOW FACED HAD BEGUN A LONG TIME AGO... BACK IN THE STATES...
SO YOU WANT TO RESIGN YOUR COMMISSION IN THE AIR CORPS, LIEUTENANT! WHAT, MAY I ASK, IS YOUR REASON?
IT'S SIMPLE, SIR. I'M JOINING UP WITH GENERAL CHENNAULT'S FLYING TIGERS!
THE AMERICAN VOLUNTEER GROUP, EH? I SEE! A FINE COLLECTION OF PILOTS, I'VE HEARD!
THE BEST, SIR! FLYING WITH THEM WILL BE A PRIVILEGE. AMERICA WILL PROBABLY BE FIGHTING JAPAN SOON, ANYWAY! I JUST FIGURE TO GET STARTED EARLY!
STONER REMEMBERED. HE REMEMBERED THE GROUP THAT TRAVELED ACROSS THE PACIFIC AND INTO ASIA TO THE FLYING TIGER BASE. AND HE'D BEEN ONE OF THEM...
WELCOME TO CHINA, GENTLEMEN...
THAT WAS ALL THERE WAS TO IT, REALLY. ALWAYS, THERE'D BEEN THE GROUP. THE SENSE OF COMRADERY. THE TIGERS WERE A UNIT. THEY FOUGHT AS ONE. THEY LOOKED OUT FOR THEIR OWN. STONER HAD LEARNED THAT ALMOST AT ONCE...
HE'D LEARNED THAT DURING HIS FIRST DOGFIGHT WITH THE SLEEK FAST MANEUVERABLE ZEROS... WHEN MOODY HAD INTERCEPTED THE JAP DIVING ON HIM... THE JAP HE NEVER EVEN SAW UNTIL IT WAS TOO LATE...
MOODY HAD SAVED HIS LIFE... AND STONER HAD REALIZED THE VALUE OF COOPERATION. HE'D LEARNED HOW MUCH THE TIGERS DEPENDED UPON EACH OTHER...
2

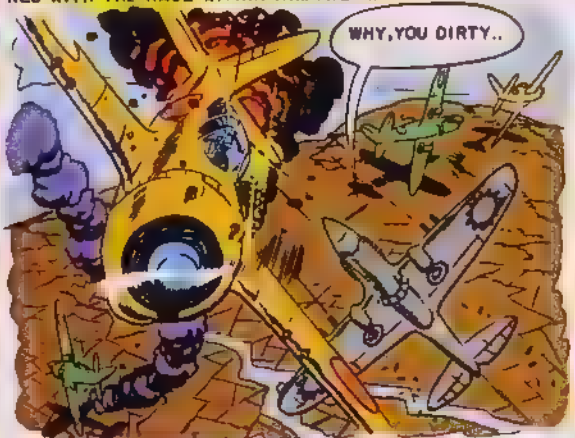
STONER HAD FOUGHT FOR CHINA, YES. BUT HE'D FOUGHT FOR THE THRILL OF IT, TOO FOR THE DANGER . THE EXCITEMENT... THE BLOOD RACING THROUGH HIS VEINS. HE'D FOUGHT HARD AND PLAYED HARD...

THOSE HAD BEEN GREAT DAYS. THE CHINESE HAD BEEN GRATEFUL TO THE FOREIGNERS WHO WERE HELPING THEM RID THEIR LAND OF THE SCOURGE OF THE RISING SUN .

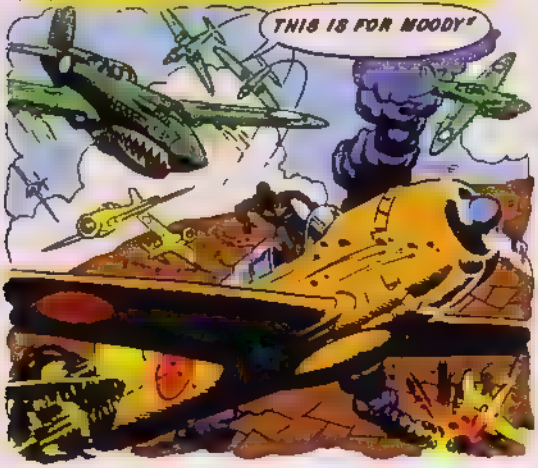
THEY'D BEEN A RECKLESS BUNCH, THE TIGERS. SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE. CLOSE. THAT WAS WHY IT HAD HURT SO MUCH THAT DAY OVER THE RICE PADDIES, WHEN THE ZERO'S DROPPED OUT OF THE SUN...



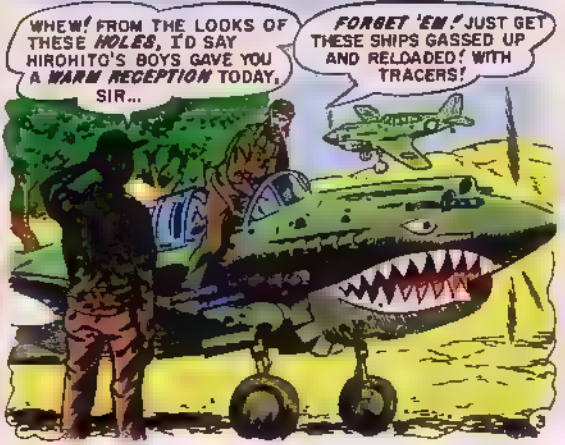
STONER HAD WATCHED MOODY'S SHIP SHUDDER ..THEN DROP AWAY, SPINNING EARTHWARD. MOODY! HIS BUDDY! HIS PAL! THE GUY WHO'D SAVED HIS LIFE! GONE! THE SKY HAD TURNED RED WITH THE RAGE WITHIN HIM *THEN*...



HE'D KICKED RUDDER, STICKED RIGHT, AND PEELED INTO THE JAP FLIGHT HIS WING GUNS CHATTERING SPITTING FORTH ANGRY STEEL AVENGING STEEL .



STONER HAD BEEN AN AVENGING DEMON THAT DAY. HE'D SENT THREE ZEROS TO THE RICE PADDIES FAR BELOW. BUT IT HADN'T BEEN ENOUGH. THE RAGE HAD STILL BURNED WITHIN HIM, LATER, WHEN HE'D LANDED...

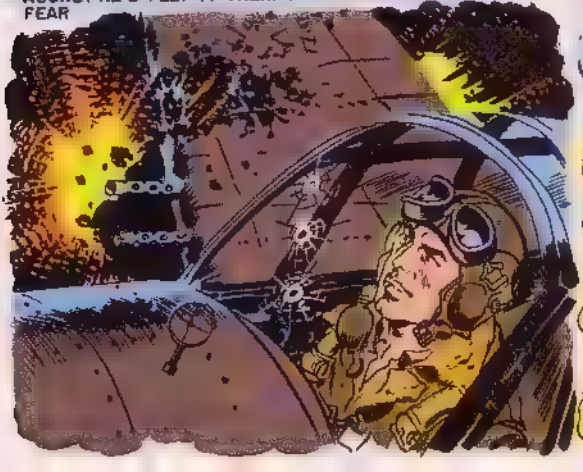


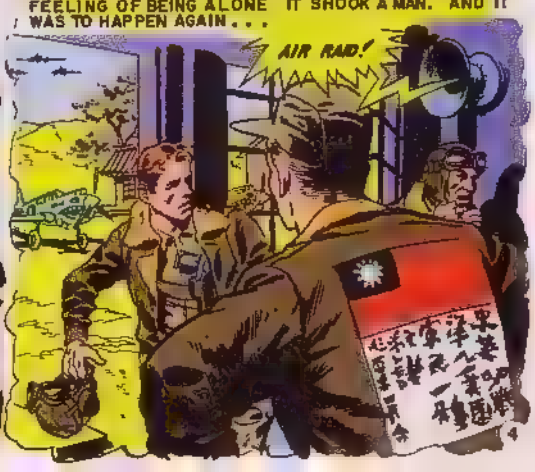
TRACERS? WHAT'S UP, STONER?
MOODY WAS A NICE GUY. I FIGURE WE OUGHT TO PAY OFF FOR HIM. HE'D HAVE DONE AS MUCH FOR US. HOW ABOUT IT?

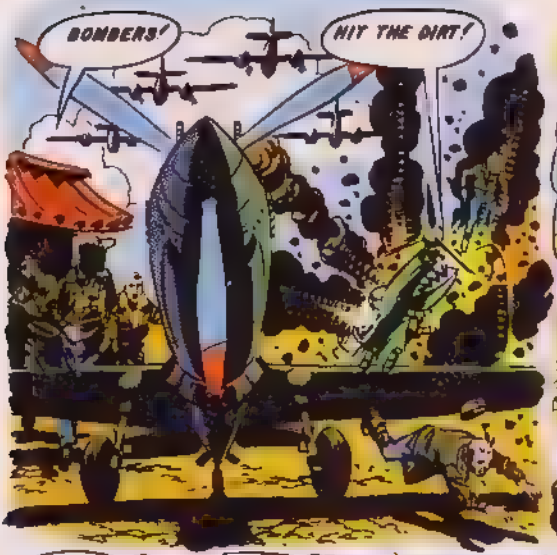
HOW ABOUT IT? STONER REALLY HADN'T HAD TO ASK. THIS WAS A GROUP. A UNIT. WITH ONE HEART. ONE THOUGHT. THE RAGE HAD BEEN IN THE OTHERS, TOO. .

TIGER TRACER BULLETS HAD FLAMED A PATTERN OF REVENGE ACROSS THE JAP FIELD. AND THE JAP ANTI-AIRCRAFT HAD COME ALIVE..
ALL RIGHT..LET'S HIGH-TAIL IT OUT!

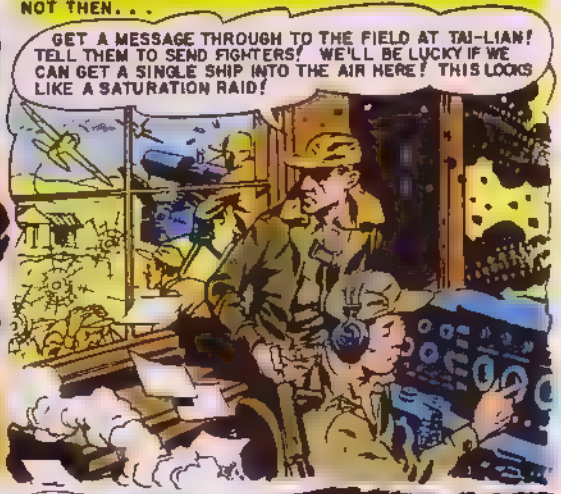
THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED. STONER HAD ZOOMED, BANKED, AND SCREAMED BACK DOWN... STRAFING LOW... IN SPITE OF THE ACK-ACK... IN SPITE OF THE SQUAWKING INTER-COM WARNINGS. AND WHEN HE'D CLIMBED AGAIN...SUD-DENLY, HE'D FOUND HIMSELF ALONE IN THE SKY. . .

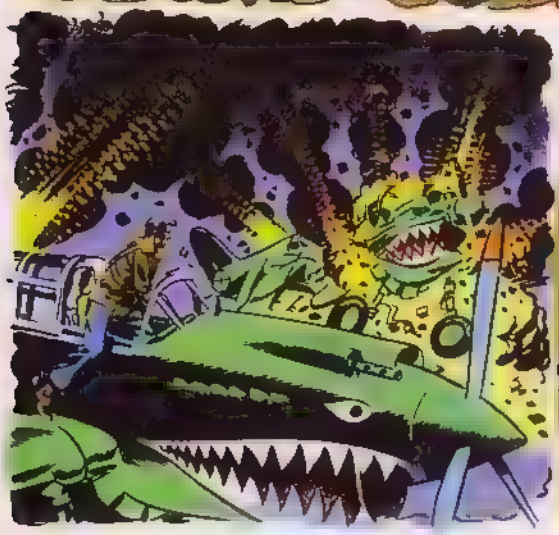

HIS SHIP HAD ROCKED WITH FLAK BURSTS. METAL HAD TORN FROM HIS WINGS. BUT WORST OF ALL, HE'D BEEN ALONE. HE'D FELT IT THEN. THAT FIRST ICY TOUCH OF FEAR


SOMEHOW, STONER HAD MADE IT BACK TO THE BASE. AND THE RAGE WAS GONE. THERE WAS ONLY THAT EMPTY FEELING IN THE PIT OF HIS STOMACH... THAT FEELING OF BEING ALONE IT SHOOK A MAN. AND IT WAS TO HAPPEN AGAIN . . .
AIR RAID!

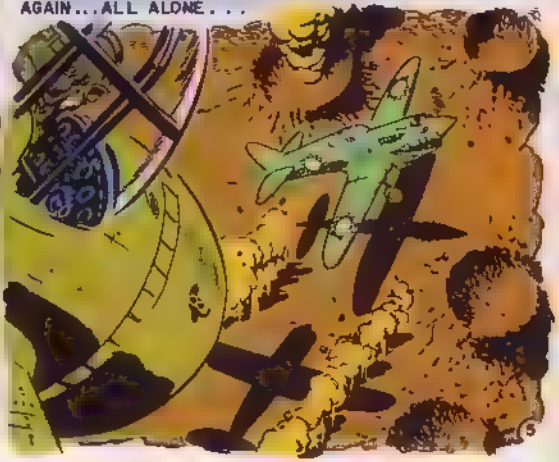


THE JAPS HAD COME IN WAVES. THEIR BOMBS HAD BLANKETED THE FIELD. BUT STONER HADN'T BEEN AFRAID. NOT THEN. . .





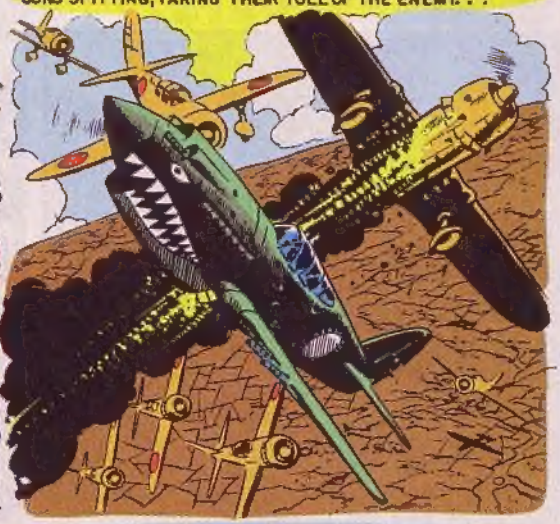
NO! STONER HAD NOT BEEN AFRAID. NOT UNTIL HE'D LIFTED HIS P-40'S WHEELS FROM THE POCK-MARKED RUNWAY. NOT UNTIL HE'D REALIZED THAT HE WAS ALONE AGAIN... ALL ALONE. . .



THEN, IT HAD TOUCHED HIM AGAIN! THE ICY FINGER. BUT, HE'D SHAKEN IT OFF. HE'D ROARED INTO THE JAP BETTYS... A GNAT STABBING AT GIANT WASPS... A WHIRLING DUST MOTE IN A SEA OF FLAME...

STONER HAD BEEN ALONE... KNOWING THAT HE COULD EXPECT NO HELP... NO COMFORTING COMPANIONSHIP. YET, SOMEHOW, HE'D FOUND THE STRENGTH TO DO WHAT HAD TO BE DONE...

SOMEHOW, HE MANAGED TO STAY ALIVE... ROLLING, DIVING, GUNS SPITTING, TAKING THEIR TOLL OF THE ENEMY...

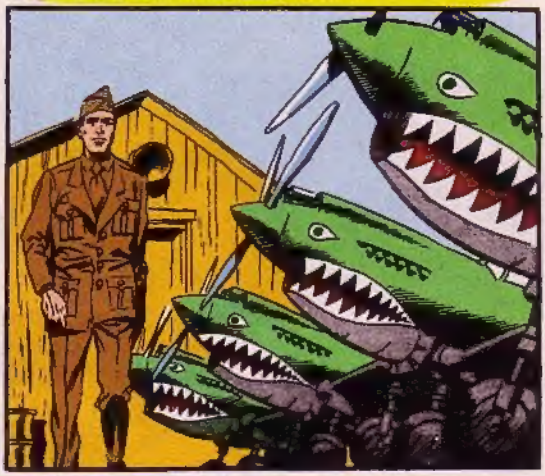


SOMEHOW, STONER HAD MANAGED TO DISRUPT THE ATTACK... BREAKING THE ENEMY FORMATION... SPOILING THEIR BOMB RUNS... UNTIL THE FLIGHT HAD ARRIVED FROM TAI-LIAN...

IN THE END, THE ENEMY HAD STREAKED FOR HOME... AND THE PILOTS HAD CROWDED AROUND STONER WHEN HE'D BROUGHT HIS RIDDLED P-40 IN...

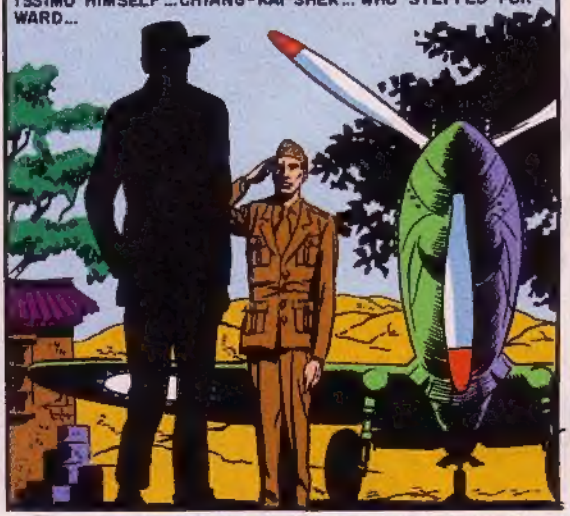
AND NOW...AGAIN...STONER WAS ALONE. AND AGAIN, THE ICY FINGER OF FEAR REACHED OUT AND TOUCHED HIM. BEFORE, THE LONELINESS HAD COME SUDDENLY. BUT THIS WAS DIFFERENT. THIS TIME, STONER'D HAD DAYS IN WHICH TO LOOK FORWARD TO IT...

THIS TIME, HE'D KNOWN WHAT TO EXPECT. THIS TIME HE *KNEW* HE'D BE ALONE. AND THE FEAR GRIPPED HIM AS HE STEPPED FROM THE READY ROOM...



HE WALKED STIFFLY...ERECTLY...PAST THE CURIOUS STARES...ACROSS THE FIELD...DOWN TO THE LINE. AND BESIDE HIS OWN SHIP, HE CAME TO A HALT...

FOR A MOMENT, NO ONE STIRRED. THIS WAS A SOLEMN MOMENT. A FRIGHTENING MOMENT. IT WAS THE GENERALISSIMO HIMSELF...CHIANG-KAI-SHEK... WHO STEPPED FORWARD...



IT WAS THE GENERALISSIMO HIMSELF WHO RETURNED STONER'S NERVOUS SALUTE, AND THAT WAS THE WORST MOMENT OF ALL. THAT WAS WHEN STONER ACTUALLY BEGAN TO TREMBLE...

THAT WAS WHEN THE EYES OF EVERY MAN IN THE FLYING TIGERS WERE ON STONER. EVEN THE EYES OF GENERAL CHENNAULT! STONER FELT NAKED AND HELPLESS. IT WAS EVEN MORE FRIGHTENING THEN HE'D EXPECTED...WHEN THE GENERALISSIMO PINNED THE MEDAL ON HIS HEAVING CHEST...

The Ace of ACES HIGH!

An interview with the legendary George Evans

Conducted January 7, 1995

PART V

Interview by S. C. Ringgenberg

Edited by G. M. Carter

RINGGENBERG: *You've done a bit of advertising work as well.*

EVANS: That's right… for Johnson and Cushing (an agency that handled just about everything) but primarily did continuity type advertising that went with the big comic sections of the time… in the Sunday paper. I did a lot of that. And then they handled spot illustrations and a segment of comics for *Boys' Life.*

But I'll tell you something, advertising people were not nearly as nice to work with as the people who put out comic books.

RINGGENBERG: *Could you compare the Fawcett offices with the atmosphere at the EC offices?*

EVANS: The offices of Fawcett had a whole run (of) paperback books and men's magazines. I think they had *True* magazine and other big titles, and they had a more extensive office and yet the atmosphere was the same. You walked into Fawcett and everybody would holler "Hi, George! What's new?" You'd holler out to every name you knew. And it was a big family thing up there, even the boss, whose name was Will. If he happened to be there he'd come out and sit around and quack a while. You know Fiction House had the Inner Sanctum and so on.

When Al took me down to see the people at EC, I walk in and there's Bill and Al sitting on a big couch in this smaller office space, real friendly and nice… and nobody knew me. I didn't know anybody either, but they were still looking up and saying "Hi, how ya doin'? What's new?" So, the atmosphere felt pretty much the same.

It was hard to believe that Bill and Al were the big moguls at EC because they put on no airs whatsoever… never did, right up until the time Bill died. He was the same old Bill.

RINGGENBERG: *Looking back at the EC days, what do you recall with the greatest affection?*

EVANS: Well, the aviation stories… I felt at home doing them and I loved doing them. In the horror stories, the one where some little fellow (in the splash panel) is walking along a street, a lonely street, and there's a cat he's scared. The little fellow's British and has a derby. I liked that one in particular. I don't know why. But that one stays with me.

RINGGENBERG: *When you were working for EC how much work would you do in a typical month?*

EVANS: Probably no more than four stories because as I said I had other accounts and kept busy on them.

RINGGENBERG: *After EC folded were you able to get enough work?*

EVANS: I could make ends meet but it got much leaner of course. And the other

comic people were not too eager to see us EC people around. In fact, do you know Bob Kanigher? He was running the war books up at DC at the time and I went in to see him out of the clear sky. He looked at the stuff I had done for EC and then tossed it on the desk and stared up at me and said, "You people at EC ruined the comic book market and now you come around with the rest of us who are still able to make a go of it and think we're going to give you work? Not me." But in later years I worked for Bob Kanigher, or at least through Murray Boltinoff, did stories that Bob wrote.

RINGGENBERG: *That's right. I remember a few things you did for DC and you also did one or two aviation jobs for Warren Publishing in the 1960s.*

EVANS: I think I did one and a two-page filler for them.

RINGGENBERG: *Did you ever do any horror for the Warren Comics, like* Eerie *and* Creepy?

EVANS: No, I didn't. They kept calling me about it, but those other accounts had developed pretty well and I had more time to devote to them... and the rates were a lot better with them than with Warren. And Warren wasn't paying badly either.

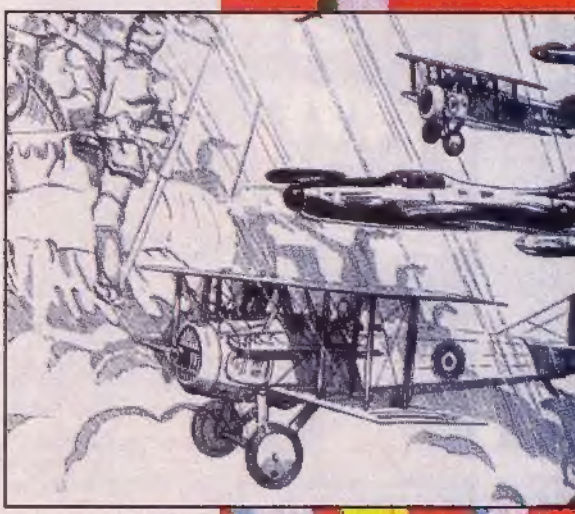
RINGGENBERG: *When did you pick up the Secret Agent strip from Al Williamson?*

EVANS: I had ghosted three stories in the 1970s and I guess I began doing it in 1980 on my own. He turned it over to me. It was a funny bit right there. As a kid even, I used to draw comics and have the effrontery to send them off to King Features, figuring I was as good as any of them... and they would return them. They were always kind about it. King was the big money then, if you believed the publicity stories.

As a kid, I used to tell my family that I was going to get a big money contract with King Features. Later Ev and I got married and had a family on Long Island. When things would get lean or as one company folded or another, we'd say, "King Features is going to call and offer me a fabulous salary soon."

And then, by God, one day the phone rang and Ev gave me the funniest blank look and said, "It's King Features." (*Laughter*)

But they didn't offer a fabulous salary. The money for story strips is far from fabulous these days. I do it more for love if it and for the interest I have in it than I do it for the money that comes out of it.



RINGGENBERG: *How many papers are carrying your strip now?*

EVANS: I haven't the foggiest idea. Not many in the United States. But they tell me that the European, the offshore market I guess they call it, is still pretty good.

RINGGENBERG: *From what I've read, the European market and South America are very big on adventure strips, still. Listen George, thanks for taking the time to chat with us.*

EVANS: It's been a pleasure. Give my best to all the EC collectors out there.

—END